

Chief's Message – January 2011 “Great Expectations”

It is with a lot of pride that I look forward to the New Year as Chief of the City of Santa Barbara Fire Department. I regard Santa Barbara as one of the finest cities in the world, and our Fire Department reflects that standard for the community. I think that one of the reasons for this is that we have high expectations here in Santa Barbara; we don't want to settle for the cheapest or the easiest methods of doing things, but rather look for quality in our lives and our community. I share those high expectations and I believe that all hands of your Fire Department do as well. The men and women of S.B.F.D. are not just standing by to protect and serve, but are working diligently everyday, to improve and provide additional services that respond to your life and safety needs. A few examples of this are engine company fire inspections, child car seat installations, children bicycle helmet program, defensible space home inspections, Fire Safety House education, community emergency response team training, ongoing efforts at preplanning for earthquake, tsunamis, and wildfires, and improved response to hazardous materials and technical rescue incidents. Oh yes, we respond to your emergencies too!

With the cooperation of our firefighter's labor union and your support for public safety we have been able to continue our existing standard of coverage. This is a lot of words to say that despite the poor budget situation, we have been able to keep our entire department fully staffed at every station 24/7 and 365 days a year. Our challenge now, is to put a magnifying glass on what we do, so that we can be even better. This spring, our department will be conducting planning sessions, revisiting our mission statement, and defining goals and objectives for the next 5 years. One of my areas of focus will be looking at our response to medical emergencies. We need to make sure that we are doing the best job possible responding to medical emergencies because these alarms are 60% to 70% of our call volume. Yes, we currently are doing a very good job, but we can always do better, and we have to continually look for improvement because if we don't, then we are not meeting the high expectations of this fantastic community.

I am interested in community input too, and will be actively asking for that. What do you want from your Fire Department? How can we be better and more effective in what we do from your perspective? Please don't hesitate to call or write me with your thoughts. Your fire department is here for only one reason, and that is to serve you. The Santa Barbara Fire Department wants to be *your* fire department that serves *you* with excellence.

Yours in safety,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew J. DiMizio". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrew J. DiMizio, Fire Chief